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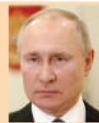


President Yoon pushes Busan's World Expo Bid

Detailed News On Page-08

Wagner head rejected offer to join army

Detailed News On Page-08



Imam ul haq joins Babar's Colombo Strikers in LPL

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Election campaign from Punjab

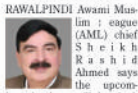
DNA



LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) announced on Friday that Punjab would be the party's "starting point" for its election campaign. Addressing a press conference, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said: "The PML-N is starting its election campaign from Punjab today." He pledged to launch the electoral process with verve, saying the PML-N candidates will be "actively present" in each constituency. Sanaullah said: "As many as 146 of the National Assembly and 297 members of the provincial assembly will represent the PML-N in all constituencies." He made it clear that there would be very "little room for the seat adjustments" with any party.

Elections decisive for politicians

FAISAL SHEIKH



RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed says the upcoming elections will be decisive for politicians, saying the ruling coalition will face a political crisis. Taking to Twitter, the former interior minister said the government secured the loan deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) when the tenure of the "guest actors" was nearing its end. He said the ruling partners wasted a whole year while claiming to have a "Plan B and Plan C", but in reality, they had no viable plan at all. He said Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had granted a generous sum of \$3 billion at the nod of someone else as no one was ready to trust them. "Whenever they visit any country, people label them beggars," Rashid said. Lashing out at Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the AML chief said the premier spent his day delivering speeches and having photo-ops.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

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Afghan govt warned Army fumes over TTP safe havens

"Terrorist attacks are intolerable, would elicit effective response from security forces," says ISPR



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

QUETTA: The country's armed forces have expressed serious concerns on the safe havens and liberty of action available to banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Afghanistan. This was said during Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir's visit to Quetta Garrison on Friday, where he was briefed on a recent terrorist attack in Zhob, military's media wing, the ISPR, said in a statement. "It is expected that interim Afghan Government would not allow the use of its soil to perpetrate terror against any country, in the real sense and in line with commitments made in Doha Agreement," it said.

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Top terrorist commander killed in Afghanistan

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Karachi 'emir' of the banned Jamaat-ul Ahhrar (JuA), Muhammad Daudzai, was shot dead by unknown gunmen in Afghanistan on Friday, confirmed sources within the proscribed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The sources said that the chief was gunned down in Sharana city of Pakitika province. The militant commander belonged to the Pindiali Tehsil of Mohmand District, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K.P). He was appointed as the Karachi emir several years ago by a former JuA chief. The notorious commander was wanted by the Pakistani authorities for his alleged involvement in several attacks, extortion and target killings.

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PM breaks ground on Chashma NPP Unit-5

Shehbaz says the project must be completed before the schedule

DNA

MIANWALI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday broke ground on the 1,200 MW Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit 5 (C-5) in Mianwali, which is likely to be completed in seven to eight years at a cost of around \$3.48 billion. On June 30, 2023, the prime minister witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the C-5 project between China National Nuclear Corporation Overseas Ltd (CNNOS) and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC). Addressing the ground-breaking ceremony at Chashma, the prime minister said the project should be completed before the given schedule keeping in mind the country's requirements for clean and cheap energy sources.

PICTURES ON PAGE 2 & 3

LAHORE: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Friday reached consensus over the matters of caretaker setup and electoral reforms. Sources divulged that during the meeting in Dubai, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and former president Asif Ali Zardari discussed holding elections.

Continued on Page 06



JAKARTA: Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad M. Khan paid a courtesy call on the Indonesian President Joko Widodo. The Foreign Secretary conveyed good wishes of the Pakistani leadership to President. -DNA

COAS in Iran on two-day official visit

Will discuss defence, security cooperation

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir on Friday reached Iran on a two-day official visit. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), COAS will meet Iranian soldiers and civil leadership. "The army chief will exchange thoughts on defence and security cooperation with the Iranian officials," the ISPR added. Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir's visited Quetta Garrison on Friday, where he was briefed on a recent terrorist attack in Zhob, military's media wing, the ISPR, said in a statement.

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan gets LNG shipment offer

MEHTEBA PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Just two days after Pakistan secured final approval to borrow \$3 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the crisis-hit country's request to buy liquefied natural gas received a response from a supplier for the first time in more than one year. Last month, Pakistan failed to secure LNG from the spot market in its first attempt in about a year, as no supplier seems to budge to the

Continued on Page 06

Pak-Indonesia Business Council FS hopes forum will take bilateral ties to new heights

Arsjad Rasjid P.M. says Pakistan an important non-traditional trading partner of Indonesia

DNA

JAKARTA: Foreign Secretary Dr. Asad Majeed Khan witnessed the signing ceremony for the establishment of the Pakistan-Indonesia Business Council, held on 13th July at the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KADIN) in Jakarta. Speaking on the occasion, the Foreign Secretary termed the establishment of Pakistan-Indonesia Business Council as an important step towards deepening of economic engagement and unlocking the vast potential within Pakistan-Indonesia partnership. He expressed hope that the Council will serve as a catalyst for further economic cooperation by improving business-to-business interaction, promoting joint ventures, generating employment opportunities, and reducing poverty to build prosperous and resilient societies. In his keynote address, Chairman KADIN Mr. Arsjad Rasjid P.M. noted that Pakistan was an important non-traditional trading partner of Indonesia. He emphasized the immense potential for mutually beneficial economic ties between Pakistan and Indonesia and underscored the importance of long-term collaboration to unlock the untapped potential in both markets. He expressed KADIN's readiness to host interactive sessions and networking opportunities and to explore potential collaboration and forming lasting partnerships.

Over 14,000 evacuated from flooded areas

More rains forecast in the upper parts of Pakistan

ABBAS HASHMI

LAHORE: Punjab caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday said over 14,000 people had been evacuated from 1122 from the province's flood-affected areas so far. Pakistan's central region has been facing a flood situation for days as the northern states of India, where the catchment areas of the Sutlej and Ravi rivers are located, have witnessed torrential downpours in the past week. Consequently, India has been releasing more water towards the downstream areas in Pakistan. A day ago, a rescue operation was conducted in the province's Kasur district as water from the Sutlej River flooded 15 villages, deprived four others of electricity and washed away standing crops. Sharing the evacuation data in a Twitter post today, Naqvi said he had visited villages beyond the Talwar Post relief camp near the Ganda Singh border with India in Kasur to oversee the rescue operations in flood water. Meanwhile, the Flood Forecasting Division (FFD) said in a 6pm update that the flood-water at the point of Ganda Singh in the Sutlej River was normal with both, the inflow and outflow, of water at 55,900 cusecs. The update said there was low-level flooding at the point of Sulaimanki headworks at the Sutlej River, where the inflow and outflow of water were recorded at 67,012 cusecs. Earlier, a statement by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) - issued by its Director General Imran Qureshi - said the flow of water at the Ravi, Chenab and Jhelum was normal and asserted that the PDMA's control room was closely monitoring the water flow in the rivers.

President, PM felicitate Macron on French National Day

National Day of France celebrated France, Pakistan relations diverse; promising: envoy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Nicolas Galey, French Ambassador to Pakistan has said since taking office in early 2022, he had worked tirelessly with his team and Pakistani partners to strengthen a bilateral relationship that he was happy to describe as friendly, diverse and promising.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Senator Talah Mahmood, Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey, CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani and others in a group picture on the occasion of the National Day of France. - Online

Pakistan wishes to further build on its friendly ties with French Republic

people-to-people contacts, education, climate change and energy transition. The president added that he was confident that under President Macron's dynamic leadership, we would take our bilateral relationship to a higher level for the mutual benefit of our two countries. "I avail myself of this opportunity to convey my best wishes for your good health and happiness, and continued progress and prosperity of the people of the French Republic," the President concluded. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also extended well wishes to French President. In his tweet, he said, "I extend my warmest greetings to H.E. President Emmanuel Macron & the French people on their National Day today. The day commemorates the revolutionary struggle of the French people that resulted in the storming of the Bastille and ushered in a new era of liberty, equality & fraternity. As Pakistanis were experiencing the devastating floods last year, President Macron and his government came forward with prompt assistance. Equally gratefulness was the French advocacy of climate change & support to Pakistan during the Resilient Pakistan Conference in Geneva. Pakistan wishes to further build on its friendly ties with French Republic."

My priority is to ensure, with our Pakistani partners, it is concrete for the benefit of the Pakistanis and France-Pakistan friendship

Continued on Page 06

US helps KP strengthen Land Records System

While in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ambassador Blome also joined Inspector General Akhtar Hayat and KP Police Officers in an inauguration ceremony of the recently completed \$17.2 million Joint Police Training Center in Nowshera

DNA
PESHAWAR: The US government is partnering with the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to strengthen transparency and accuracy in the land records and registration system, promoting economic growth and investment in the seven subdivisions of the Newly Merged Districts. At a ceremony in Peshawar attended by Ambassador Blome on July 13, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) provided \$5 million worth of equipment to the KP Board of Revenue, augmenting its capacity for accurate land measurements.

spoon's crucial role in safeguarding women's rights to property and inheritance. "With the support of USAID, the Board of Revenue of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is entirely digitizing the land records system in the seven subdivisions of the Newly Merged Districts...Land record management will be revolutionized, benefiting the people of the Merged Areas by significantly increasing efficiency, accuracy, and convenience," said Ikramullah Khan, Senior Member of the Board of Revenue. While in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ambassador Blome also joined Inspector General Akhtar Hayat and KP Police Officers in an inauguration ceremony of the recently completed \$17.2 million Joint Police Training Center in Nowshera.

largest construction project ever completed by INL in Pakistan. Implemented by the UN Development Program (UNDP), the completion of this project has enabled the training center to increase its training capacity to 1,700 personnel at one time. The project constructed 75 buildings, including academic buildings, a health unit, men's and women's hostels, and a multipurpose hall. Ambassador Blome and Inspector General of KP Police Hayat also signed an agreement to deliver \$13 million in life-saving armored vehicles, bulletproof vests, and helmets to the KP Police. At the event, Ambassador Blome stated, "This investment will have a lasting positive impact. The strengthening of law enforcement presence and the writ of government in remote and under-governed areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will lead to increased security and prosperity."



MIANWALI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif signing a commemorative board during the ground-breaking ceremony of the 5th unit of Chashma Nuclear Power plant (C-5) in Chashma, Mianwali. — DNA

River Sulej still flows in low flood

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said all major rivers i.e. Indus, Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi are flowing under "Normal Flow Condition" except for River Sulej which is presently in low flood at Suleimanki. According to daily FFC report on Friday, present combined live storage is 8.555 MAF which is 63.64% of total 13.443 MAF. As per FFD Lahore Arabian Sea moderate moist currents were penetrating into upper parts of Pakistan up to 5000 feet at the reporting time. They are likely to strengthen. Westerly winds through prevail over Northeastern Afghanistan. Further to this well-marked seasonal Low lies over Northern Balochistan with its trough extending northwards. For the ensuing 24 hours, scattered wind thunderstorm/rain of light to moderate intensity with isolated heavy galls is expected over Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Sahiwal, FIC, Khan & Balwalpur Divisions of Punjab and Peshawar, Kohat, Banna & D.I. Khan Divisions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including over the upper catchments of all the major rivers of IRS. Isolated wind thunderstorm/rain may also occur over Northeastern Balochistan during the same period. For the next two days, there is a likelihood of scattered widespread wind thunderstorm/rain of light to moderate intensity with isolated heavy galls over Islamabad, Punjab (Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, —APP

Towns, district councils' budget increased by 50%

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah was told on Friday that the budget of all the towns and district councils has been increased by 50 per cent, and the local government would strengthen their funds and providing them with equipment. This was informed by Sindh Minister of Local Government Syed Nasir Hussain Shah to the Sindh CM, who on the third consecutive day interacted with the newly elected chairmen, and vice chairmen of district councils, Town Municipal Committees, and Town Committees of four districts of Hyderabad Division and urged them to develop parks, playgrounds, water supply and sanitation schemes, and streets, a statement said. "The main issues of our towns and villages are defective or nonfunctional sewerage systems that they gather or open drains are flowing into the streets," he said and added that his government has constructed sewerage systems almost in all the small towns and villages but there is lack of ownership of these schemes which you (chairmen) have to look after and own in the larger interest of the people of the areas. The meeting was attended by Minister of Local Government Syed Nasir Shah, MPA Aijaz Shah, Dost Mohammad Jesar, Asif Shah, and others. The chairmen and vice chairmen of district councils of four districts — Tando Muhammad Khan, Jamshoro, Dadu, and Badin were also present on the occasion. The Sindh CM said he has

started meetings with the newly elected representatives of local bodies so that he could listen to them and give his guideline so that a working relationship could be developed to redress the public grievances. "Our main objective is to serve the province and make a difference," he said. Syed Murad Ali Shah said that during his tenure he has developed water supply and sanitation schemes in every town and village. "We have developed towns, and parks, constructed village-to-market roads, and the roads to connect the villages with main roads," he said and added that some of the small roads have dilapidated due to heavy rains and floods while some of the sewerage schemes have failed to serve the purpose because of lack of ownership.



LWMC completes zero-waste operation across city

LAHORE: Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Babar Sahaib Din said on Friday that the company was working tirelessly to provide exceptional cleanliness services and making various areas of the provincial capital zero-waste. He said in a statement the LWMC had deputed special teams for a cleanliness operation at Zaman Park, Canal Road, The Mall road, Jail Road and joining areas. The LWMC enforcement wing has also been mobilized to take action against illegal dumping of waste, added the statement. Babar Sahaib Din said during special zero-waste operation, the LWMC ensured cleanliness around streets, squares, main roads, bus terminals across the city. More than 6,000 containers have also been cleared across the city as per routine.—APP

Ulema strongly condemn Israeli statement at UN

DNA
LAHORE: Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Afridi has said that the statement made by the Israeli delegate in the United Nations was strongly condemned in the Jama sessions on Friday. Addressing a press conference at Press Club here, he said it was for the first time in 75-year history of the

country that Israel had issued any statement in favour of any group in Pakistan. He said that Israel was the most brutal country in the world, adding that human rights were being violated the most in two countries including Israel and India. He said it was clear from the Israeli's statement for whom it was seeking relief. Afridi said a significant progress had been made in the country's economy over the past two weeks. He said that a finance committee had been formed for which the army had

played an important role. The PM's special representative said that regulations had been set for interfaith coordination among all sects of Muslims for Muharram-ul-Haram. He said that during the holy month, the moans of processions should be followed according to the law. He said sectarian riots were a national crime, adding that all scholars had always rejected extremist thinking. He said that all schools of thought were indifferent to the one who insulted the sacred objects of any religion...

Minister listens to public issues at open court

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and In-charge Prime Minister's Public Affairs & Grievances Wing Murtaza Javed Abbasi said on Friday the incumbent government was committed to resolving public issues on priority basis as swift measures were being taken in that regard. He was addressing a khulfa khudabai (open court) held at the Civil Secretariat here. Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider and other officials concerned were also present. The minister listened to people's problems and issued on-the-spot directions to address complaints promptly and submit

a report within six days. A complainant, Muhammad Sultan, informed the minister about his daughter, who was a domestic worker and had been in illegal custody of her employer. He alleged that his daughter was being tortured, and also not being paid wages for the last three years. The minister directed the police to investigate the matter. A police team visited the house where the girl was being employed and asked the affected girl about her grievances. Murtaza Javed Abbasi said the minister returned in charge to ensure impartial investigation into the matter. He directed the Inspector General of Police

(IGP) to take strict action against land-grabbers and those involved in the business of illegal loans and exploiting people. He ordered to form a committee to initiate action against the mafia. The minister said the process of filing complaints should be made easy and facility of lodging complaints via whatsapp should be ensured if anyone was not able to submit complaints in writing. The federal minister directed DC Rafia Haider to listen to the public problems personally to resolve them on priority. The minister also listened to problems of people related to Lahore Electric Supply Company.—APP

ISSI, IFI sign first-ever MoU between Pak Lebanon think tanks

FAISAL SHEKH
ISLAMABAD: Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (GAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) and Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut on Friday signed the first-ever memorandum of understanding (MoU) between any Pakistani or Lebanese think tank to promote mutual research and activities. Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (GAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) represented by its Director, Amina Khan and the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut, represented by its Country Director, Dr. Joseph Bahout, signed the MoU, a new release said. In his remarks on the occasion, Director General

mutual benefit. The DG ISSI added that the uncertain global environment, accentuating traditional and non-traditional security threats, and issues of common concern necessitated international cooperation and such collaborative endeavours as being initiated between ISSI and IFI. While speaking on this occasion, Ambassador Salman Athar, Pakistan's Ambassador to Lebanon highlighted that this was the

first-ever MoU between the think-tanks of Pakistan and Lebanon. He added that through close mutual cooperation both sides could benefit hugely and achieve a lot. Country Director IFI, Dr. Joseph Bahout in his remarks hailed the signing of the MoU and said that complex global issues required broader cooperation and this collaboration was a step in the right direction



French NGO to work in health, education

KARACHI: French NGO Triangle Generation Humaitaire intends to work in the fields of education, health and clean drinking water in the province and its delegation led by Director Operation Ivan Deret met Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori in this regard. Governor Sindh while welcoming the delegation, expressed hope that its assistance would provide improved basic amenities of life to locals in the province, said a spokesperson of Sindh Governor on Friday.—APP

Chinese Companies keen to set up joint ventures in Pakistan

DNA
ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Chinese companies led by Gan Meilin, Chairman, Xiangeng Hi-Tech Electric Co. visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and showed keen interest to set up joint ventures in Pakistan in various fields including machinery manufacturing, electric vehicles, equipment industry, drilling, magnetic wire manufacturing, commercial concrete, equipment in-

stallation and department store sales. The delegation exchanged views with the business community to explore areas of mutual collaboration and business partnerships. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) represented by its Director, Amina Khan and the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut, represented by its Country Director, Dr. Joseph Bahout, signed the MoU, a new release said. In his remarks on the occasion, Director General

term business partnerships would help connect the Chinese investors with right partners in Pakistan. Gan Meilin, Chairman, Xiangeng Hi-Tech Electric Co. of China said that his delegation has come to Pakistan to interact with the Pakistani counterparts and explore areas of business cooperation. He said that both countries have good potential to establish sustainable business partnerships and regular interactions between the entrepreneurs of both countries would

help achieve this goal. Foad Wahed, Senior Vice President ICCI said that construction is a growing industry in Pakistan and it was the right time for the Chinese companies to enhance their presence in Pakistan in the construction sector to achieve lucrative outcomes. Both sides exchanged views on promoting business cooperation in various fields to achieve mutually beneficial results for the economies of Pakistan and China.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

- JULY**
July 01/Japan Self Defence Day
July 01/Singapore Armed Forces Day
July 01 / Canada National Day
July 01/Somalia Independence Day
July 04/USA Independence Day
July 05/Algeria Independence Day
July 09/Argentina Independence Day
July 09/Mongolia Revolution Day
July 14/France National Day
July 15/Brunai Sultan's Birthday
July 21/Belgium National Day
July 20/TRNC Independence Day
July 23/Egypt National Day
July 26/Cuba National Day
July 26/Liberia National Day
July 30/Morocco National Day
- Hotels & Restaurants**
Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051-2826121
Mansal.....0334-5421812
- Turkish Airlines.....8494949
- Emergency**
Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 & Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
Motorway Police 927060120
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222556
Rawalpindi.....927060120
- Enquiry**
Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Enquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA.....9281692
- Hospitals**
CMH.....5611111
MH.....561116
Cantt Hospitals.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9251170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-49
Shifa International 4603656
- Departments**
CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555884
TMA.....5770886
Contentment Board 927051-3
- Water Tank**
Islamabad.....0321-5744480

PM for promoting skilled based vocational training

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the government was promoting the skilled-based vocational training to expand foreign remittances that would ultimately help improving the current account deficit of the country.

In his address after laying the foundation stone of the central campus of National University of Technology (NUTECH) here, the prime minister said the new campus would help producing thousands of skilled-based human resource every year who would play their key role in the country's development.

The prime minister, pledging to make the vocational education as the government's number one priority, said the human resource earn more than the raw labour, hence increasing the country's foreign remittances. He said vocational training was



key to prosperity and development in today's era as nations get prosperous only at the back of these skilled-based people. He hoped that after completion, the campus would play key role in promoting technical and industrial education in the country. He recalled that he for the first time in 1997, put his full force to promote vocational training in the country when there was no comprehensive institution to look after this important area of the education sector. Similarly, he said the Punjab government led by him established Punjab Education Endowment Fund (PEEF) for which Rs 2-billion annual funding was allocated to provide scholarships to the talented and deserving students on merit basis. He said this great project under Dr. Anjum Sugh brought educational revival in the province. Likewise, he said Danish Schools' project was also his brainchild which helped

to provide maximum relief to the people. PM Shehbaz also distributed certificates among the high achieving youth in various fields. Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanvir Hussain said that the coalition government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with its untiring struggle brought the country out of crisis and set it on the right path. Therefore, he hoped that the people would vote for PML-N in the next general election. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Youth Affairs Sham Faris said vocational education was as important as it was the formal education. She said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during his previous tenure as Chief Minister Punjab worked really hard to promote technical and vocational education in the province. Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and Information Minister Marium Aurangzeb were also present on the occasion.

Pakistani, Chinese institutions to sign cooperation agreement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Two well-known Pakistani and Chinese institutions have decided to enhance cooperation to boost education in the education sector. In this connection, an agreement is set to be signed between Pakistan's National Defence University (NDU) in Islamabad and China's Grandview Institution (GVI), a distinguished independent think tank. Pakistan's federal cabinet has granted approval for the agreement, which also has garnered support from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), and the Ministry of Law and Justice. According to a Gwadar Press report, the agreement is intended to enhance collaboration in education, academics, and research between the two nations. In June, Pakistan's Finance Minister Ishaq Dar expressed the nation's dedication to bolstering bilateral relations with China, particularly in the realms of economy, trade, and finance. Dar made these remarks in a conversation with Charge'd Affairs at the Embassy of China in Pakistan, Ms. Pang Chunxue.

IMF loan termed a relief for masses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group, Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday that the approval of the loan by the IMF and the issuance of the first tranche of 1.2 billion dollars have proved a respite for the public and businessmen. The decision of the lender will ease the ongoing uncertainty and stop boarding of dollars which will stabilise the economy. Inclusions include ending electricity subsidies, keeping debt within serviceable limits, keeping the value of the

dollar in line with the market, improving governance, increasing revenue, ending corruption, reforming the energy sector, and making the country resilient to climate change. The next installment will be possible only after a quarterly review of operational progress on these issues. The IMF's conditions indicate fundamental flaws in the country's economy, but these will be extremely difficult to address in the short term. Climate change has also been mentioned in the terms, which will lead to further tightening of environmental laws. The monsoon and flood season has started in the region, and India has released water to Pakistan as usual, while last year Pakistan suffered a loss of 30 billion dollars due

to floods, he said. On the other hand, the implementation of aid pledges by the international community for Pakistan to deal with the flood damage last year will also be relatively easy after the IMF programme. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that if the quarterly review of the current programme is successfully completed, it will be possible to take the next instalment from the IMF, without which it is impossible to run the country. He further said that the current and incoming caretaker governments should take advantage of this opportunity to start the implementation of fundamental reforms; otherwise, we will have to pay a heavy price for inaction.

to floods, he said. On the other hand, the implementation of aid pledges by the international community for Pakistan to deal with the flood damage last year will also be relatively easy after the IMF programme. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that if the quarterly review of the current programme is successfully completed, it will be possible to take the next instalment from the IMF, without which it is impossible to run the country. He further said that the current and incoming caretaker governments should take advantage of this opportunity to start the implementation of fundamental reforms; otherwise, we will have to pay a heavy price for inaction.

Tractor production decrease 46% during FY 23

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The production of farm tractors in the country witnessed a decrease of 46.11 percent to 21,726 units during the fiscal year 2022-23, against the production of 58,880 units during the last year 2021-22. During July-June 2022-23, the production of tractors also witnessed decreasing trend as it went down from 5,659 units as compared to 3,072 units, showing a decline of 45.71 percent, according to Pakistan Automobile Manufacturers Association (PAMA) revealed. Production of pickups, Light Commercial Vehicle (LCVs) and Jeeps also dipped by 19.58 percent to 31,333 units during the period under review from 44,421 units during fiscal year 2021-22. However, the production of buses witnessed an increase of 6.05 percent from 661 units to 701 units during fiscal year 2023, the PAMA added. Meanwhile, the production of passenger cars also declined to 161,884 units against the production of 226,433 units during July-June 2021-22, the data revealed. The manufacturing of motorcycles and three wheelers in the country plunged to 1,188,087 units from 1,826,467, showing decrease of 34.95 percent, it added.-APP

to floods, he said. On the other hand, the implementation of aid pledges by the international community for Pakistan to deal with the flood damage last year will also be relatively easy after the IMF programme. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that if the quarterly review of the current programme is successfully completed, it will be possible to take the next instalment from the IMF, without which it is impossible to run the country. He further said that the current and incoming caretaker governments should take advantage of this opportunity to start the implementation of fundamental reforms; otherwise, we will have to pay a heavy price for inaction.

Weekly inflation up by 0.33 pc

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.33 per cent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on July 13, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 258.53 points as compared to 257.79 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 28.96 per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 = 100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, increased by 0.51 per cent and went up to 267.24 points from last week's 265.88 points. The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,868, Rs 22,868-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175, and above Rs 44,175 witnessed an increase of 0.50 per cent, 0.46 per cent, 0.41 per cent and 0.21 per cent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 21 (41.17%) items increased, 11 (21.58%) items decreased and 19 (37.25%) items remained stable.-APP

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HEC asks students, parents to check recognition of institution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has urged students to ensure the accreditation of professional degree programmes and the recognition of admitting university/sub-campus from HEC before taking admission. According to HEC, the professional degree programmes include Engineering, Medicine & Dentistry, Veterinary Education, Nursing, Architecture and Town Planning, Pharmacy, Law, Homoeopathy, Tibb, Agriculture, Business, Computing, Teacher Education, and Technology. The programmes require accreditation from the respective professional councils, it said. To verify the accreditation status of your desired programme, HEC asked students to reach out to the concerned professional councils' website hec-app

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Ancient Silk Road legacy forum

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-China Institute in collaboration with China Study Center, COMSATS organized the Silk Road Cultural Forum themed on "Exhibition of CPEC achievements over the decade". The forum featured speeches by the accomplished diplomats like Amb. G. Misood Khalid, Former Ambassador to China; Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, Spokesperson and Additional Foreign Secretary, Strategic Communications Division & Public Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. Moreover, DR. Tahir Mumtaz Awan, Director, China Study Centre, COMSATS University; Li Wenyu, Director of CPEC CCC (Cultural Communication Center) of Jiangsu Province, Education Department; Dr. Aneel Salman, Chair Economic Security, IPRI; Wang Chun Ping, Chinese Heritages Technologies; and Noreen, Director, Chinese Media Group also made their remarks. The forum featured three documentaries on Chinese culture, Chinese and Pakistani cultural dances, Taiwan Dance-Gilgit Baltistan, Chinese Tea, Silk, Food stalls, Language learning & Cultural Exhibition, Art Exhibition, display of Progress & Photos of CPEC Projects and how they have contributed to Pakistan's

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Briefs

ANF recovers over 24 kg drugs in four operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations across the country managed to recover over 24 kg drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that in an operation on M-1 Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad, five kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Mardan, traveling in public transport. In another operation near Kamalpur Interchange Faisalabad, 3.8 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Faisalabad, traveling in public transport. In another operation near Faisal Garden Faisalabad, 12 kg hashish and 300 grams kic drug were recovered from a motorcycle. An accused resident of Faisalabad was also arrested during the operation. The spokesman said that in fourth operation, 2.3 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of a motorcyclist, resident of Minnow arrested near Jhambra Bridge Mianwali. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.—APP

IRSA releases 269,400 cuces water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 269,400 cuces water from various rim stations with inflow of 312,206 cuces. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1517.02 feet and was 119.02 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 143,300 cuces and 150,000 cuces respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1201.60 feet, which was 151.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 59,500 cuces and 10,000 cuces respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddo and Sukkur was recorded as 170,700, 191,800, 157,300 and 87,400 cuces respectively. Similarly, from Khaser Khabla, a total of 37,200 cuces of water released at Nowshera and 44,100 cuces released from River Chenab at Marala.—APP

Rekindling a bygone custom for healthy, cheaper living

ISLAMABAD: At a time when health standards are falling due to sedentary lifestyle a man in his mid 70s is promoting a fun way to get fit through cycling - an active way of commuting. Zabeeruddin Khawaja, who celebrated his 74th birthday last Sunday along with dozens of his admirers, strongly believes cycling still an appreciable mode of exercise to keep oneself healthy. "Unfortunately, we have turned into a vehicle-dependent society. There's a fairly large number of single occupancy vehicles, plying on our city arteries adding to carbon footprint and polluting our environment," the cycling freak said. "I have a strong conviction that cycling makes people healthy both physically and mentally being also necessary for emancipation," said Khawaja, surrounded by dozens of cyclist belonging to Early Bird Riders (EBR) - a club founded by him to promote cycling. The Islamabad-based "old young man" (a title the age-defying Khawaja uses for himself), has registered hundreds of men and women with the EBR club that also holds volunteer bicycle rodeos in the Capital and other parts of the country to promote clean environment. It uses social media platforms to announce cycling event, mostly taking place on weekends. "I believe women can be socially more responsive if they switch to cycling. The power of two wheels will ultimately help in achieving women empowerment," added Khawaja, who has so far taught peddling to around 200 "sheroes" - a word he has coined for women cyclists of EBR and kids aging between 8-12 years.—APP

ML-1 railway line project to start this year: Ahsan

The ML-1 project was to be done in the first phase, but somehow, it got delayed in the last four years

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal said that with China's support, work on the multi-billion ML-1, the main railway line project between Karachi and Peshawar, would be started as early as possible during this year. The ML-1 project was to be done in the first phase, but somehow, it got delayed in the last four years. "There was little followup from the previous government, but now, we are actively following it up," the minister said. "We are hopeful that this project will start this year," he said in an interview with APP after a special meeting of the 12th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) of CPEC in Beijing. He said, "The railway track has been badly damaged during the floods last year. This

is the main railway track line linking north and south Pakistan. We want to repair it and we want to upgrade it as early as possible. It will be a US\$10 billion project. We will do it in phases, and we hope to start this project as soon as possible during this year." Ahsan Iqbal said, "The 150 years old rail railway line now requires major modernization and upgrade. We are hoping that with China's help, we will be able to modernize this railway track from Karachi to Peshawar and it will be a very big support to our logistics." About Karachi circular railway, he said, "It is a mass transit project for Karachi which is the biggest city in Pakistan. So, we also agreed to fast-track that project." Ahsan Iqbal said the JCC meeting was very historic because it marked a decade of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "About 10 years ago, both China and Pakistan started a

new journey of bilateral relationship through CPEC which is a pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative." "As a result, today, we have more than \$55 billion worth of investments in Pakistan under CPEC and the flagship project has helped Pakistan overcome its energy crisis." Under CPEC, we installed more than 8,000 megawatts of power projects. It has helped us to construct modern highways, and motorways, which has improved connectivity in the country, linked different parts of the country, and provided efficient logistic support to the economy. He said, "Through CPEC, we have also developed infrastructure in Gwadar." "We have also improved the digital infrastructure with fiber optic cable that has been laid between China and Pakistan." "With CPEC, we have also carried out a number of socio-economic projects for uplifting the social conditions of people."

"So, this is a very historic journey in which we are able to transform the nature of the relationship between two countries and make it much stronger in the economic cooperation field," the minister added. He said, "We had a discussion about how to take forward CPEC in the next phase, which will promote business-to-business cooperation, industrial cooperation, and also Chinese private investment in Pakistan's energy, agriculture, information technology, and mining sectors, where there are many opportunities for investors to have good business opportunities for Pakistan, to take benefit of investment and technology from China." "It will be a win-win investment for both countries and we look forward now to taking CPEC into the next phase, based on greater cooperation in industrial and agricultural fields, and also in the technology areas." Sharing more details in

terms of how did the CPEC benefit the livelihood of Pakistani people, he said, "The CPEC projects have created almost 200,000 job opportunities and helped Pakistan overcome the energy crisis." He said, "We had 12 hours and 14 hours of electricity shortage, the factories were closed, and the workers were laid off. The small businesses were out of business, in hospitals, the patients were suffering, in educational institutions, the students were suffering." "So, by solving the energy crisis, everyone in Pakistan has benefited from the great contribution that has been made by CPEC." Similarly, in some remote areas, where projects had been made, for example, in Thar, which a Pakistan very remote area, and he had huge untapped coal deposit there. With CPEC, we were able to do the mining project and now it has become the energy capital of Pakistan, he said.



ISLAMABAD: Celebrating 70 years since the legendary first ascent of Pakistan's killer mountain, Nanga Parbat! German Ambassador Alfred Brannas and Austrian Ambassador joined forces to honor the expedition of 1953. A riveting film screening followed by an exclusive photo exhibition took us back to the historic journey.—DNA

'BISP program' to ensure more transparency: Kundi

FAISAL SHEIKH ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Faisal Karim Kundi, Friday vowed to make BISP social welfare program more accountable and transparent under direct payment system. He said the government has initiated online registration of the BISP Dynamic Survey after recent flood, adding, this survey has been initiated to include new families who were left out during the 8171 Ehsaas Program grant survey registry. The main objective of starting the survey system is to register more eligible families and conduct future surveys

in country, he added. To another question, he said the BISP beneficiaries will now getting the increased amount of Rs 9,000 under the assistant program adding, the BISP is a revolutionary programme of the government and implements various schemes for the welfare of the disadvantaged segments of society. "The number of Benazir Scholarships for Undergraduates has also increased this year, he said, adding, including Transgender Persons in the Benazir Kafalat program as well as the families with differently-abled persons with relaxation in Poverty Score is another big step of government," he added.

56 ASIs promoted

ISLAMABAD: A total of 56 Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs) of the Islamabad Police have been promoted to the next rank following the recommendations of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) of the force. On recommendations of DPC, notification for promotion of Assistant Sub-Inspector for the post of Inspectors has been issued. Islamabad

Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan said, "Welfare of the police force is among the top priorities and each member of the force is a hero for him as he serves the people despite various odds." Earlier, ICCPo had ordered the Capital Police Officer (Headquarters), the chairman of the Departmental Promotion Committee to call the

World Youth Skills Day to be marked tomorrow

ISLAMABAD: World Youth Skills Day will be marked on July 15 (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan. The purpose of celebrating the day is to encourage youth to celebrate the value of acquiring skills like building, making, and creating to achieve personal success and fulfillment. "By empowering young people, they can better advance the broader mission of the United Nations (UN) for lasting peace, sustainable development, and human rights for all," according to UN Secretary-General António Guterres. A UN resolution to establish a World Youth Skills Day was adopted by the General Assembly on December 18, 2014. "On the UN's website, it stated, "Education and training are the keys to success in the workforce. However, unfortunately, existing systems are failing to address the learning needs of many young people," he added. "A large number of youth have low levels of achievement in basic literacy and numeracy. Skills and jobs for youth feature prominently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Both the resolution and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) quote an International Labour Organization (ILO) publication which stated that 73.4 million young people were estimated to be unemployed in 2011, which equated to a 13.1% youth unemployment rate.—APP

Rumina Alam thanks friendly countries

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) Rumina Khurshed Alam on Friday thanked the friendly countries including China, Saudi Arabia, and UAE for showing confidence in the leadership and contributing to the economic revival of our country. "Pakistan is now heading towards a bright future," she said while talking to Radio Pakistan's current Affairs program.—APP

Strict action against Hundi operators demanded

DNA ISLAMABAD: Former Vice President of FPCCI Aif Ikram Sheikh on Friday demanded steps to restore the confidence of the expatriates. He also demanded action against those involved in hundi business who are offering higher exchange rates for profit, which is damaging the economy. Resolving problems and restoring the confidence of expats is necessary as the country lost over \$4 billion in FY23 as it received a total of \$37,024 billion against a record \$31.278 billion in FY22, he said. Aif Ikram Sheikh who has also served as President ICPI and Chairman PVMA said in a statement issued here today that we lost four billion dollars in remittances, which is much

higher than the amount the government struggled to secure from the IMF. The country received a total of \$27,024 billion in remittances during FY22, compared to a record \$31.278 billion in FY22, a decline of 13.6 percent or 4,254 billion. The central bank did not offer any reason for the decline of the remittances, but analysts said the government's effort to keep the dollar at lower than actual rates hit the inflows through banking channels. The government tried to maintain the dollar rate parity at \$220 in the first half of FY23, which proved counterproductive. The USD grossly appreciated in the open market, and resultant a grey or black market emerged that started offering Rs20 to Rs25 per dollar higher rates, badly hitting re-

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Currying favor with White House

ACCORDING to the "United Kingdom's National Security and Investment Act 2021: annual report 2022-23", 866 investment notifications were received for the 12-month period to March 31 this year. Of these, "national security powers" were employed to "call in" 65 acquisitions for a further assessment review. And of the call-ins that were closed during the reporting period, the secretary of state made 57 final notifications and issued final orders "to block, unwind or impose conditions on" 15 acquisitions, with one of the final orders subsequently being revoked. Although the UK claims "that the Act remains country agnostic", of the 65 call-ins, 42 percent were acquisitions involving acquirers associated with China. This, despite the acquirers associated with China being involved in only 4 percent of the 866 acquisition notifications. And while acquisitions associated with China also received the highest number of final notifications (clearances), of the 15 final orders, eight involved acquirers associated with China.

Given that the final decision-maker has rather tellingly been designated with the US-style title of secretary of state for the purpose of investment review, that China is such a prominent presence among the recipients of final notifications should perhaps come as no surprise. As a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in the UK said, the measures against China-related investments are discriminatory. "We strongly urge the British side to stop its unreasonable oppression of Chinese companies and provide a fair, just and non-discriminatory business environment for Chinese companies," the spokesperson said.

But the Washington-washed mentality that pervades the UK government is obvious in Dowden's words. That the White House is seemingly possessed by blood-thirsty vampires at present perhaps explains why the UK is so eager to curry favor with the US administration — the defense sector being a big money magnet for the UK, as the report indicates. Abusing national security laws to deliberately suppress foreign companies violates World Trade Organization rules and is the weaponizing of investment reviews as championed by the US. Clinging so tightly to the US' coattails is unlikely to benefit the UK economy in the long run to the extent it hopes. It only has to look at the EU to see how the US treats its supposed friends.



China and Germany not rivals

FOR whatever reason, the German government is wrong in calling China a "competitor" and "systemic rival" in its latest strategy paper about China. With a trade volume of 298 billion euros (\$334.3 billion) in 2022, with a year-on-year rise of 21 percent, China has remained Germany's biggest trade partner for seven years, even bigger than its leading ally the US. Many German brands, such as Volkswagen, have joint ventures in China that champion the Chinese car market.

From every aspect it's fair to say the two nations are good partners as the German strategy said. But equally absurd are the other two terms it imposed on China, namely, "competitor" and "systemic rival". Listing the two terms in its report exposes the German government's attempt to follow the US blinded by a sense of antagonism, which will hurt its own interests. To take a confrontational mentality against nations that could be friends is dangerous, a lesson Germany must have learned well from history.

During her 16 years in office, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's predecessor Angela Merkel visited China 12 times, each time to a new city, a feat even many Chinese people have not done. She kept good, effective communication with China, which is how her government maintained good relationship with China despite the radicalization move in the whole West. Having taken her position for one year and a half, it's time Scholz got some of her wisdom, too.

IMF program: is the country out of financial trouble?

Waheed Hussain



The PM of Pakistan Shabbaz Sharif also held various interaction with the US Ambassador to Pakistan with same purpose. Its not the first time that the US administration has supported Pakistan to strengthen its financial position, to save the country from any possible default, it has been playing the same role in the past as well, depending on its relations with the government in Islamabad

THANKYOU, International Monetary Fund (IMF), for releasing \$ 1.2 billion tranche under the recently agreed \$ 3 billion Standby Arrangement Program for the period of 9 months. According to Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar \$ 4.2 billion has been deposited in the State Bank of Pakistan account during a week's time. Dollars from the friendly countries like Saudi Arabia \$ 2 billion and UAE \$ 1 billion added to the SBA foreign reserves after the IMF agreed to the new financial loan plan. Apart from the IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva, the other staff of the Fund both in Pakistan and in Washington has played a vital role in approving the new program, which would provide a breathing space to the straggling financial condition of the country and will also avoid the much talked about "default."

The United States of America also played a decisive role in convincing the IMF to approve \$ 3 billion dollars SBA program. As we have been informed through the media that the US ambassador to Islamabad H.E Donald Blome held a series of meetings with the Finance Minister Ishaq Dar in past few weeks extending full support to Pakistan in achieving a breakthrough with the IMF. Behind the seen constructive efforts of the US administration helped Pakistan to get the loan from the fund, which had been very tough with the finance ministry negotiating team during 9th round early this year, on the vital issues, including revenues and expenditure plan of the government, lowering energy circular debts, structural reforms in the various public sector enterprises, market determined exchange rate and increase in the policy rate of the SBA.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan Shabbaz Sharif also held various interaction with the US Ambassador to Pakistan with same purpose. Its not the first time that the US administration has supported Pakistan to strengthen its financial position, to save the country from any possible default, it has been playing the same role in the past as well, depending on its relations with the government in Islamabad.

The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken tweet about approval of the IMF program for Pakistan speaks a lot, "We stand by the Pakistani people during these hard times and welcome the International Monetary Fund's approval of a program to support Pakistan. We urge Pakistan to continue working

with IMF toward macroeconomic reforms and sustainable economic recovery."

The PDM government has been struggling with the IMF since it took power in April last year, after the removal of PTI government through a vote of no-confidence. The PTI government, which entered a \$ 6 billion 39-months Extended Fund Facility (EFF) program in 2019 with the IMF, abandoned the program just before its departure from the government on certain tax and subsidies related issues. Later, the two PML (N) finance ministers Miftahulmaah and Ishaq Dar constantly blamed the PTI government for signing unrealistic and tough agreement with the IMF which burdened the masses with price hike and put the current government difficulty. The prime minister in his recent address to the nation once again castigated Imran Khan government for the economic and financial policies and held him responsible for the present bad economic conditions.

Well in Pakistani politics, every new government blames the previous one for the economic and financial devastation. Imran blamed the PML (N) in 2018 while the PDM is doing the same today. The best solution was that the present government should have disclosed the 2019 IMF agreement to the masses telling them who actually was responsible for the financial and economic destruction in the country. The debts are hitting the citizens and country badly. We need debt to pay back debts and interests. Recently, the IMF has projected rising external debt by \$12.975 billion, going up to \$136.549 billion in the ongoing fiscal year against \$123.574 billion in the last financial year 2022-23. It also projected that the external debt would go up to \$142.137 billion in the fiscal year 2024-25, \$146.770 billion in the fiscal year 2025-26, \$150.138 billion in 2026-27 and \$152.138 billion in the fiscal year 2027-28.

We are in a debt trap. How long we get out of it? A billion dollars question. We have seen a rapid increase in our internal and external debts since 2002. We need strict financial management. We need a debt management policy. We need to rely on our own resources. We need to keep a balance, to develop collaborative solution in the country. Successive governments had been over-spending by getting loans from IFIs and friendly countries. Good loans are for development projects, while the bad loans are for debt servicing. How long we could survive like this? How long our Prime Ministers and Finance Ministers

would keep on begging the friendly countries like China, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and others for the favor. Enough is enough. Our main political parties, especially those which are aspiring to form the next government, should come up with a clear economic and financial plan. Pakistan has been getting dollars from IMF since 1950s. Whenever our government requests the IMF for the loan, politicians and people accuse the international financial institution of the strict conditions. The governments impose new taxes, remove subsidies resulting in an increase in price hike-inflation, again the target is the IMF. Whatever is negotiated and agreed by any sitting government must be implemented to get the dollars from the fund. The propaganda of the politicians has become so strong that masses believe that the country's financial and economic decisions are being taken by the IMF, which is totally wrong. What the IMF demands from any government which goes into a loan agreement, financial management.

IMF asks our governments to end budget deficit, to increase revenues to run the country and pay the loans from its own resources, to reduce power and gas losses (control the circular debt), Restructure PIA, Baring, Steel Mills, and other public sector enterprises to end their thousands of billion rupees losses. It wants a smart and efficient government system to save national resources. It wants to expand the tax net to increase revenues. Why did our successive governments fail to bring any reforms in state institutions. Our politicians, especially the bureaucracy, must educate the masses about all the lending agencies that whatever money they borrow from the IMF, they have to pay to the government kitty. I request the political leaders that bring reforms in state institutions, and governments should generate financial resources to run the country — stop going to IMF, Saudi Arabia, and China for any loan, which brings a bad name to Pakistan.

No Pakistani likes that any of their Army Chiefs should be visiting countries requesting them for loans. It's not their job. Financial and political management is the job of political leadership of the country. Politicians need to live a respectable life, we must set our house in real order. Political stability is the foundation of economic and financial prosperity; therefore, leaders of all political parties must give up their personal agendas and develop political consensus. If they could?

Role of Government during the Covid-19 crisis in Pakistan

Rimsha Abrar Khan



The pandemic has taught us the importance of a robust healthcare infrastructure. Pakistan should concentrate on enhancing its healthcare system, such as hospitals, clinics, and laboratories, to better handle future health emergencies. This entails increasing the number of healthcare facilities, improving their quality, and ensuring the availability of essential medical supplies, including PPE and ventilators. Moreover, investing in research and development can facilitate the development of domestic expertise and reduce reliance on external sources during...

THE COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on economies worldwide, and Pakistan is no exception. With the spread of the virus and subsequent lockdown measures, the country experienced a significant disruption in employment and livelihoods. In response, the Pakistani government has taken several measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on employment and support affected individuals and businesses.

This article explores the role of the government in employment during the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. To address the economic fallout of the pandemic, the Pakistani government implemented various stimulus packages aimed at supporting businesses, protecting jobs, and generating employment opportunities. These packages included tax relief measures, loan deferment schemes, and financial assistance to vulnerable sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). By injecting liquidity into the economy, the government aimed to prevent widespread layoffs and job losses. To encourage businesses to retain their employees during the pandemic, the government introduced wage subsidy programs. These programs provided financial support to companies, enabling them to continue paying salaries to their workforce even during periods of reduced economic activity. By doing so, the government aimed to prevent a surge in unemployment and ensure that individuals and their families could meet their basic needs. Recognizing the need for job creation, the government launched several initiatives to stimulate employment during the pandemic. One notable program was the "Kamyab Jawan Program," which aimed to provide loans and support to young entrepreneurs, enabling them to start their own businesses and generate employment opportunities. Additionally, the government encouraged infrastructure development projects and public-private partnerships, creating job opportunities in construction and related sectors. To address the skill gap exacerbated by the pandemic, the government focused on enhancing the employability of individuals through skill development and training programs. These initiatives aimed to equip the workforce with relevant skills for emerging sectors and promote entrepreneurship. By investing in human capital, the government aimed to enhance the long-term employability and resilience of the workforce, even in the face of future crises. The government also recognized the need to provide social protection to vulnerable individuals and families affected by the pandemic. In collaboration with international organizations and local stakeholders, the government expanded the coverage of existing social safety net programs and introduced new ones. These initiatives included cash transfer programs, food assistance, and healthcare support, ensuring that those most affected by the crisis had access to essential resources and services. The government actively sought

partnerships with the private sector to address the employment challenges posed by the pandemic. By engaging with businesses, industry associations, and trade unions, the government aimed to facilitate dialogue, identify needs, and develop collaborative solutions. Public-private cooperation played a crucial role in supporting businesses, retaining jobs, and promoting sustainable economic recovery. As the pandemic continues to pose an ongoing challenge, the government must remain vigilant and adapt its strategies to address emerging employment challenges. While the initial response focused on immediate relief measures, the government should now prioritize initiatives that promote sustainable job creation, skill development, and entrepreneurship. Investing in digital infrastructure, promoting innovation and technology adoption, and supporting sectors with high growth potential can contribute to long-term employment generation and economic resilience.

The pandemic has taught us the importance of a robust healthcare infrastructure. Pakistan should concentrate on enhancing its healthcare system, such as hospitals, clinics, and laboratories, to better handle future health emergencies. This entails increasing the number of healthcare facilities, improving their quality, and ensuring the availability of essential medical supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE) and ventilators. Moreover, investing in research and development can facilitate the development of domestic expertise and reduce reliance on external sources during emergencies. Efficient testing and surveillance systems play a crucial role in containing the spread of the virus. Pakistan should expand its testing capacity by investing in more testing centers and equipment, and ensuring accessible testing for all citizens. Additionally, developing advanced contact tracing applications and deploying a skilled workforce for contact tracing can help identify and isolate potential cases promptly. This information can assist in targeted interventions and limit the transmission of the virus. Vaccination remains the most effective tool in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. Pakistan needs to ensure fair access to vaccines across all regions of the country. A comprehensive vaccination campaign should be launched, prioritizing vulnerable populations initially and gradually covering the entire population. It is essential to address vaccine hesitancy through public awareness campaigns, dispel misinformation, and promote the benefits of vaccination. Collaborating with international organizations and pharmaceutical companies can help secure an adequate vaccine supply and expedite the vaccination process. The pandemic has exposed the vulnerabilities of Pakistan's socio-economic fabric. Strengthening social safety nets is crucial to protect the most vulnerable sections of society, including daily wage earners, informal workers, and marginalized communities. Expanding cash transfer programs, providing food assistance, and extending health insurance coverage can alleviate the financial burden on

affected individuals and families. Additionally, introducing employment benefits and support mechanisms for small businesses can help prevent long-term economic repercussions. The pandemic has accelerated the need for digital transformation in various sectors. Pakistan should prioritize the development of digital infrastructure, including improved internet connectivity, to facilitate remote work, online education, and telemedicine services. Encouraging the use of digital payment platforms and e-commerce can reduce physical contact and boost economic activity. Furthermore, investing in digital skills training and digital literacy programs can enhance the workforce's adaptability to changing circumstances and promote inclusive growth. The closure of educational institutions during the pandemic has disrupted the learning process for millions of students. Pakistan needs to develop robust online learning platforms and provide access to remote education resources, especially for marginalized communities. Ensuring that students have access to digital devices and the internet can bridge the education gap. Additionally, investing in teacher training programs for online instruction and promoting the use of digital tools in classrooms can improve the quality of education in the long run. The pandemic has also highlighted the need for effective crisis preparedness and response mechanisms. Pakistan should establish a dedicated national task force responsible for monitoring and coordinating responses to public health emergencies. This task force should collaborate with international health organizations, share real-time data, and develop standardized protocols for managing outbreaks. Investing in research and development for the creation of indigenous diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines can also enhance the country's preparedness for future health crises.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges for employment in Pakistan. However, the government has proactively responded by implementing various measures to support businesses, protect jobs, and create employment opportunities. Economic stimulus packages, wage subsidy programs, skill development initiatives, and social protection measures have played a critical role in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on employment. Moving forward, sustained efforts to promote entrepreneurship, enhance skill sets, and foster public-private cooperation will be essential for a robust and inclusive recovery, ensuring a brighter future for employment in Pakistan. At the end, I thank to Respected Sir Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer who has shown in my growth as a writer. His belief in my abilities and their dedication to helping me succeed has been an invaluable source of motivation. His mentorship has empowered me to explore new perspectives, challenge my own assumptions, and develop a stronger and more confident voice.

Briefs
Army fumes over TTP safe havens

FROM PAGE 01

According to the ISPR statement, the involvement of Afghan nationals in acts of terrorism in Pakistan is another important concern that needs to be addressed. "Such attacks are intolerable and would elicit effective response from the Security Forces of Pakistan," it added. The army chief during visit paid rich tribute to the Shahzad, visiting the injured soldiers at CMH, Quetta, and lauded their services to the nation and appreciated their resolve. The military's media wing said that operations against terrorists would continue unabated and the armed forces shall not rest till the menace of terrorism is root and branch removed from the country. Earlier on arrival, the COAS was received by Commander Quetta Corps. A day earlier, nine Pakistan Army soldiers embraced martyrdom while five terrorists were killed after security forces retaliated to a "dastardly attack" on the Zhob garrison in northern Balochistan on Wednesday, the military's media affairs wing said. In a statement issued in the morning, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the militants launched the attack in the early hours of Wednesday, following which four soldiers were martyred and five others were injured. The terrorists' initial attempt to sneak into the facility was checked by soldiers on duty," the ISPR said, adding that they were "contained into a small area at the boundary" in the ensuing exchange of fire.

Top terrorist commander killed in Afghanistan

FROM PAGE 01

across the country. Two of Daudzai's brothers, Mian Jaffar and Qari Qaam, were also killed in military operations by US and NATO forces in Afghanistan during the last years of Ashraf Ghani's regime.

PM breaks ground on Chashma NPP Unit-5

FROM PAGE 01

Terming it a huge milestone and a symbol of cooperation between the two great friends — China and Pakistan — Shehzad said the project would help the country promote clean, efficient and comparatively cheaper energy. He said after a pause of many years, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was going again in full swing. He gave the credit of concluding the agreement of C-5 to the coalition government and the SPD for their hard efforts. "Our detractors had been fabricating rumours all around that Pakistan was going to default on its sovereign commitments but we crossed all turbulent waters in just 15 months," he added. However, he said the risk of potential default had been completely averted through the team effort of the government. The prime minister said a couple of days ago, there was an approval of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, and in 48 hours, around \$4.5 billion were transferred by Pakistan's brotherly countries Saudi Arabia and UAE, besides another \$1.2 billion from the IMF. About four months ago, he said the Chinese government and commercial banks rolled over amounts back to Pakistan to the tune of \$5 billion. He paid his tributes to Chinese President Xi Jinping, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and UAE President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for their support in the hour of need. He informed that due to serious efforts by the coalition government and himself, the Chinese company kept the project cost at the level agreed upon in 2017-18 by the then-PML-N government and did not include the average inflation of around 10% in the project cost. Further, he said on his request that a discount of Rs30 billion was also given to Pakistan, reflecting a sense of sincerity between the two countries.

History-chasing Jabeur hopes for third time lucky at Wimbledon

"I think a final is a final," Jabeur said. "You're playing someone, Grand Slam champion or not. I think it's going to be very difficult

LONDON: On Jabeur hopes it will be third time lucky when she attempts to become the first African or Arab woman to win a Grand Slam singles title at Wimbledon on Saturday. The 28-year-old Tunisian takes on Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic, hoping to go one better than last year when she was defeated by Elena Rybakina in the final at the All England Club and lost to world number one Iga Swiatek at the US Open later in the year.

Unlike her two final losses at the majors, this time world number six Jabeur will start as the favourite against the left-handed Vondrousova, the first unseeded woman in Wimbledon final in 60 years. She has had a tough run to Saturday's championship match, beating two-time former winner Petra Kvitová in the last 16, third seed Rybakina in the quarter-final and then coming from a set down to knock out second-ranked Aryna Sabalenka in the semi-finals.

Both who ever could handle more the emotions, whoever could be more ready on the court, will definitely win that match.

Jabeur said she has always been ready for a player far lower down the rankings at 42 in the world. "I think a final is a final," Jabeur said. "You're playing someone, Grand Slam champion or not. I think it's going to be very difficult. I can't

"I want to make my path worth it, winning against all these Grand Slam champions to be in the final. Yeah, I'm going full in, and hopefully this time it will work."

Only two women have lost all three of their first Grand Slam finals, although two of those — Chris Evert and Kim Clijsters — eventually made up for their side for Saturday, with a tour best 28 wins on grass since 2021 matching the Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova between 2004 and 2006.

However, Jabeur has lost twice in 2023 to Vondrousova, in the second round of the Australian Open and third round in Miami. "I'm going for my revenge. I did it win against her this year. She has good hands. She plays very good," said Jabeur of an opponent who is appearing in her second Wimbledon mixed doubles final.

Slam final after finishing runner-up at the 2019 French Open.

Vondrousova, whose run at Wimbledon has guaranteed her a return to the world's top 20 next week, was an injured bystander at the tournament in 2022, reduced to watching a friend attempt to qualify for the main draw. A second wrist surgery had ruled her out for six months although her absence from the tour at least allowed her the space and time to get married. She is the second-lowest ranked player to reach the Wimbledon final — only Serena Williams in 2018 was ranked lower at 181, like Jabeur, the 24-year-old Czech has had to battle hard to make the final. She defeated four seeds in succession just to make the semi-finals by seeing off Veronika Kucerkova, Donna Vekic, Marie Bouzkova and Jessica Pegula. Against fourth-ranked Pegula of the United States, she was 1-4 down in the final set. In Thursday's semi-final, she swept past crowd favourite Elena Svitolina of Ukraine in two comfortable sets. "For me, it's really crazy this is happening. But I think anything can happen in tennis," she said. — APP

Historic makers Morocco to face Zambia in FIFA WC qualifiers

RABAT: Historic-making 2022 FIFA World Cup semi-finals Morocco must win a group including Zambia to ensure qualification for next edition in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Congo Brazzaville, Tanzania, Niger and Eritrea comprise Group F after a draw made on Thursday in Abidjan, the Ivory Coast's commercial capital, by former global superpowers, with Morocco being the first African or Arab country to reach the FIFA World Cup semi-finals last December in Qatar before losing to France and finishing fourth. With Europe-based stars like Yassine Bounou, Achraf Hakimi, Sofyan Amrabat and Yousef En-Neyri available, they look likely winners of the group in Zambia, posing the greatest threat. Morocco are the highest-placed African team in the latest FIFA rankings, ahead of Cup of Nations title-holders Senegal with Tunisia third, Senegal are in Group B and the biggest danger to them is likely to come from the rapidly improving Democratic Republic of Congo, who played in the 1974 World Cup when known as Zaïre, like Morocco. Saïdo Mane-inspired Senegal are seeking a third consecutive appearance at the four-yearly global showcase, with the next edition set for mid-2026. Tunisia are in Group H with Equatorial Guinea, a rising force in Africa who beat the north Africans in a Cup of Nations qualifier last month. Long-time rivals Nigeria and South Africa will clash in Group C, which also includes Zimbabwe, whose FIFA ban for government interference in football was lifted two days ago. The left-handed batter has been satisfied with the draw. The biggest threat to the three-time World Cup qualifiers could come not from second-seed Gabon, but from shock 2021 Cup of Nations quarter-finalists Gambia. Egypt have won the Cup of Nations a record seven times, but often struggle to qualify for the World Cup, reaching the final only three times. They are in Group A, where Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau could trouble the Mohamed Salah-captained Pharaohs. With the number of finalists expanding from 32 in Qatar to 48 in North and Central America, Africa are guaranteed a record nine places, and possibly 10. Each group winner will qualify automatically and the best four runners-up enter play-offs with the winners going to inter-confederation play-offs, with two places up for grabs. Apart from an African team, the confederation play-offs will include two teams from North/Central America and one each from Asia, South America and Oceania. Play-offs one and two in Africa will be played this November, with a further two rounds next year and six in 2025. The draw was scheduled for Wednesday in Zurich, only to be delayed 24 hours at the last minute without an official explanation. — Agencies

who have not qualified for the World Cup. Cameroon, who hold the African record for World Cup qualification with eight appearances, have been poor in recent Cup of Nations matches, offering hope to Cape Verde and Angola in Group D, Algeria, who lost out to Cameroon for a place in Qatar, appear likely winners of Group G with unpredictable Guinea probably the main challengers. Ivory Coast, hosts of the next Cup of Nations in January and February 2024, are another country who will be satisfied with the draw. The biggest threat to the three-time World Cup qualifiers could come not from second-seed Gabon, but from shock 2021 Cup of Nations quarter-finalists Gambia. Egypt have won the Cup of Nations a record seven times, but often struggle to qualify for the World Cup, reaching the final only three times. They are in Group A, where Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau could trouble the Mohamed Salah-captained Pharaohs. With the number of finalists expanding from 32 in Qatar to 48 in North and Central America, Africa are guaranteed a record nine places, and possibly 10. Each group winner will qualify automatically and the best four runners-up enter play-offs with the winners going to inter-confederation play-offs, with two places up for grabs. Apart from an African team, the confederation play-offs will include two teams from North/Central America and one each from Asia, South America and Oceania. Play-offs one and two in Africa will be played this November, with a further two rounds next year and six in 2025. The draw was scheduled for Wednesday in Zurich, only to be delayed 24 hours at the last minute without an official explanation. — Agencies

Kichenok wins Wimbledon mixed doubles title with Pavic

LONDON: Ukrainian Elena Svitolina's bid to win the Wimbledon singles fell short on Thursday but her warrior ambition could still celebrate a Grand Slam champion as Lyudmila Kichenok and Croatian partner Mate Pavic later won the mixed doubles.

The 30-year-old Kichenok and Pavic, seeded seventh, beat Belgium's Joran Vliegen and China's Xu Yifan 6-4 6-63. "I try to encourage the people in Ukraine and I hope this helps a little because they are fighting for their freedom," Kichenok said to a huge ovation from the Centre Court crowd. "This feels amazing. I want to thank my partner for playing incredible in this weeks." Former doubles world number one Pavic, also 30, adds the Wimbledon mixed doubles titles to five other Grand Slam doubles titles, three in men's and two in mixed. Earlier on Thursday, wildcard Svitolina was beaten 6-3 6-3 by Czech Marketa Vondrousova in the women's semi-finals. — Agencies

Ley meets Byern for Kane sale

LONDON: Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy met with Bayern officials on Thursday over the possible sale of England captain Harry Kane. However, the Spurs striker will be part of the squad for their pre-season tour of Australia and the Far East, Tottenham fly to Perth later on Friday for Tuesday's all-Premier League encounter with West Ham. With one year left on his contract, Kane's future has been subject to much speculation so far this summer. Bayern are keen to sign Tottenham's all-time leading goalscorer but had not been able to strike a deal. When new boss Spurs Angel Postecoglou met the media on Monday, he said he planned to give Kane "his vision for how to make the club successful". After visiting Perth, Tottenham fly to Thailand, where they will face Leicester on 23 July before heading to Singapore for a hastily arranged game against local side Lion City on 26 July after initial opponents Roma pulled out of the trip. — Agencies

PML-N, PPP agree over caretaker Setup

FORM PAGE 01

The meeting between Nawaz and Zardari was a continuation of the charter of democracy. Sources said the formula had been chosen for the caretaker setups in Sindh, Balochistan and the centre. In the next caretaker cabinet, the PML-N would suggest more ministers. The PPP and other parties' representation, however, would have certain percentage, sources said. Additionally, the idea of including retired judges and other personalities (from politics and business community) in the caretaker setup was also considered. The PML-N and PPP a biggest had begun discussing by names for the caretaker administration. On Monday, the PPP advised the government to dissolve assemblies by Aug. Federal Minister for Commerce Naveed Qamar, while speaking in Parliament House, stated, "It was the federal government's domain to dissolve the assemblies. The PPP, he said, wanted electoral reforms before the elections."

France, Pakistan relations diverse...

FORM PAGE 01

efficient financial system capable of supporting both to development and the protection of our planet.

"The relationship of trust was also re-established... the bilateral consultations held last February in Paris between the top officials of both foreign ministries. In the meeting, the government's domain to dissolve the assemblies. The PPP, he said, wanted electoral reforms before the elections."

COAS in Iran on two-day official visit

FROM PAGE 01

"It is expected that interim Afghan Government would not allow the use of its soil to perpetrate terror against any country, in the real sense and in line with commitments made in Doha Agreement," it said.

Pakistan Shipment offer

FROM PAGE 01

cash-strapped nation's offer. Traders, on the condition of anonymity, had said that Pakistan LNG Limited's (PLL) bid to purchase six shipments for October to December closed with no company responding to the offer. Bloomberg had reported. As per the latest update, Trafigura Group offered two LNG shipments for January to February delivery, said traders privy to the matter. According to the media outlet, the move comes as Pakistan's government finances are on the mend. The nation won \$3 billion approval to borrow \$2 billion from the IMF earlier this week, unlocking long-awaited lending that will help ease its dire need for cash. The shipments that Trafigura offered are priced at roughly a 30% premium to current market prices, according to traders. Typically, spot purchases of fuel would be sold at similar levels to market prices, said Trafigura. Pakistan won't award the tender until July 31, and it still isn't clear if the country will follow through on buying the fuel. Credit risk had been a barrier stopping LNG suppliers from selling spot shipments to Pakistan. The IMF deposited \$1.2 billion into the SBP account yesterday, boosting the cash-strapped nation's hope for economic stability, as it teetered on the brink of default for several months.

Pakistan A chase down 180 against Nepal

DHAKA: Right-handed batter Tayyab Tahir scored 51 runs to help Pakistan A chase down 180 runs with four wickets in hand against Nepal to win their first match in the ongoing ACC Men's Emerging Cup. Tayyab was a helping hand to the batters after Pakistan lost their openers in quick succession, Haseebullah (12) and Saïdullah (24) fell back-to-back to spinner, Pawan Sarfraz inside 10 overs. But, Tayyab held his nerves calm, building brief partnerships with Omar Yousof (36) and Kamran Ghulam (31). He ended up scoring 51 runs off alongside 67 balls in the second half-century. He scored 75 off 101 balls including nine boundaries and two maximums. Sompal's innings gave Nepal a breath of hope and they will now look to defend the total. Meanwhile, Mohammad Wasim Jr also supported Daham quite well, picking up four wickets for 51 runs in his 10 overs. Daham bagged five wickets, including the much-needed scalp of Sompal in the end. Sompal edged Daham's delivery behind the stumps with skipper Mohammad Harris taking a simple catch diving on his right. — Agencies

Imam joins Babar's Colombo Strikers for LP 2023

COLOMBO: Left-handed opener Imam-ul-Haq joined his national captain Babar Azam and teammates in the Colombo Strikers' squad for the upcoming edition of the Lanka Premier League (LPL). Imam-ul-Haq is set to make his first-ever foreign T20 franchise league appearance after Colombo Strikers signed him for a replacement for Ireland's Lorcan Tucker. Strikers, led by Babar Azam, now feature five Pakistani cricketers in their set of overseas players besides the Pakistan captain. Imam-ul-Haq will join up with his Pakistan teammates Wahab Riaz, Naseem Shah, Iftikhar Ahmed and Mohammad Nawaz. Before his inclusion in the Colombo Strikers' squad for the upcoming edition of the LPL, Imam-ul-Haq had only featured in the Pakistan Super League (PSL). The left-handed batter has featured in 22 PSL fixtures and has 542 runs under his belt with the help of five half-centuries. It is pertinent to mention that the fourth edition of LPL, the T20 franchise cricket tournament in Sri Lanka, is scheduled to be played between five teams, from July 31 to August 22. A total of 13 Pakistani cricketers were roped in for the upcoming fourth edition of the Lanka Premier League (LPL) in the player auction which took place last month. Notably, before the auction took place, some of Pakistan's notable cricketers had already found new homes in the LPL. Leading the charge is the formidable Pakistani captain, Babar Azam, who will be representing the Colombo Strikers. Joining Babar in the LPL was the young and fiery fast bowler, Naseem Shah, who had also been acquired by the Colombo franchise. Another key addition to the LPL is the explosive batsman, Fakhar Zaman, who will be donning the colours of the BLove Kandy team. **Pakistan Players to participate in LPL 2023** B-Love Kandy: Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad Hossain, Asif Ali, Mohammad Harris, Aamer Jamal Colombo Strikers: Babar Azam, Naseem Shah, Wahab Riaz, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Nawaz Jaffna Kings: Shoabul Malik, Zaman Khan. — DNA



N. Korea blames US for regional tensions at UNSC

The Security Council imposed sanctions after North Korea's first nuclear test explosion in 2006 and tightened them over the years in a total of 10 resolutions seeking — so far unsuccessfully — to cut funds and curb its nuclear and ballistic missile programs

NEW YORK: North Korea's UN ambassador defended his country's recent long-range missile launch in a rare appearance at the UN Security Council on Thursday when he also accused the United States of driving the situation in northeast Asia to the brink of nuclear war. Kim Song told the council that Wednesday's test-flight of the developmental Hwasong-18 missile was a legitimate exercise of the North's right to self-defence. He said the United States was raising regional tensions with nuclear threats and deploying a nuclear-powered submarine to South Korea for the first time in 14 years.

Kim said the missile launch had "no negative effect on the security of a neighboring country," pointing to Japan's announcement that the meeting, a statement from the nine council members including the U.S. and Japan, joined by South Korea, was reading to reporters concerning the launch "in the strongest possible terms" and assessing that it was the 29th ballistic missile launch this year in blatant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions banning such tests. The Security Council imposed sanctions after North Korea's first nuclear test explosion in 2006 and tight-

ened them over the years in a total of 10 resolutions seeking — so far unsuccessfully — to cut funds and curb its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The last sanctions resolution was adopted by the council in December 2017, and China and Russia vetoed a U.S.-sponsored resolution in May 2022 that would have imposed new sanctions over a spate of intercontinental ballistic missile launches. The two veto-wielding permanent members have blocked any council action in the past, and the United States urged the U.S. and North Korea to resume talks. The statement from the 10 countries said the Security Council cannot remain si-

lent in the face of so many North Korea provocations and must send a message to all proliferators "that this behavior is unlawful, destabilizing and will not be normalized." It also called on all countries to confront North Korea's illicit activities to generate revenue such as cybercrime. But Russia and China remained opposed to any council action. China's UN Ambassador Zhang Jun took note of the latest missile test but criticized the heightened U.S. military pressure on North Korea and its deployment of strategic weapons to the Korean Peninsula. He said the longtime view

Briefs

Every day 2 children drown crossing Central Mediterranean

GENEVA: Two children are down on average per day while trying to cross Central Mediterranean due to the "absence of safe and legal routes," the UN Children's Agency, UNICEF, said on Friday...

Corporate bankruptcies soar in Japan

TOKYO: The number of corporate bankruptcies in Japan soared to a five-year high in the first six months of 2023, Nikkei news outlet reported this week...

IEA trims oil demand outlook

London: The International Energy Agency (IEA) has cut its oil demand forecast for the first time this year, citing "persistent" economic headwinds in wealthy countries...

"Faces of Pak" Exhibition inaugurated in Vitebsk

The exhibition will continue till 15 August 2023. Earlier, an exhibition was also held in Minsk at the iconic National Library of Belarus in June 2023

MINSK: Pakistan Embassy in Minsk in collaboration with the Vitebsk regional museum of local history organized the opening ceremony of "Faces of Pakistan" exhibition on 13 July 2023.



of the Museum, the participants, artists, musicians, and guests who made huge contributions towards the success of this event.

Big power disputes in spotlight at SE Asia security meet

JAKARTA: Top diplomats from the United States, China and Russia attended a security meeting on Friday with Southeast Asian foreign ministers...

and Australia. The Indo-Pacific must not be another battleground, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi told ministers as she opened an earlier 18-nation East Asia Summit.

China accuses US of militarizing space

BEIJING: Amid a freeze in military-military contacts, China is accusing the United States of militarizing outer space, a day after it protested the passage of a U.S. Navy P-8 Poseidon anti-submarine aircraft through the Taiwan Strait.

She told reporters Friday she had urged Beijing for transparency about the nature of a controversial policing pact with the Solomon Islands criticised by Western powers.

'Africa land of opportunities that shouldn't be overlooked'

TEHRAN: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi speaks to reporters at Mehrabad Airport, Tehran, Iran, on July 14, 2023, upon return from his three-nation tour of Africa.

Local time from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on the country's east coast. The launch comes three years after a previous effort to explore the surface of the Moon ended in failure.

viewed online by more than 1.4 million people. Raisi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on social media about the launch that the mission 'will carry the hopes and dreams of our nation'.

Watchdog reports record surge in Israeli settlement plans

TEL AVIV: The anti-settlement organization Peace Now says the far-right cabinet of prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has advanced a record number of illegal units in settlements in the occupied West Bank in the first six months of the current year.

Advertisement for Islamabad POST magazine, July 2023 issue, featuring Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine.

NZ sees one of highest increase in cooling demand days

WELLINGTON: Cooler countries like New Zealand, Canada, and Britain will likely see the greatest relative increase in the number of days that cooling will be needed each year as global temperatures rise, according to an international study published on Friday.

Cyclone in southern Brazil leaves 1 dead

SÃO PAULO: An extratropical cyclone has devastated southern Brazil, leaving at least one person dead, 24 injured and some 790,000 people without power, local authorities said Thursday.

Western Australia issues warning over MVE

SYDNEY: The health department of Western Australia (WA) state on Friday issued a warning over Murray Valley encephalitis (MVE) in the Kimberley region, as an infected traveler is currently staying in hospital for treatment.

Briefs

Macron awards India's Modi top France honour

PARIS: France's president on Friday awarded the country's top honour to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the start of Bastille Day celebrations where he is the featured guest.

FIA arrests 9 in crackdown against loan apps

ISLAMABAD: The Cyber crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Friday said that it had arrested nine suspects for allegedly blackmailing people through predatory online loan apps.

PTI chairman submits reply to NAB

ISLAMABAD: The PTI Chairman has submitted a reply before the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in a 190m settlement case, refusing to appear before the bureau.

'Govt should complete its term instead of dissolution'

ISLAMABAD: PPP central leader Nayyar Baloch on Friday said the incumbent coalition government should complete its term - set to expire on August 12 - instead of dissolving the NA.

South Korea, now leading the Bid for 2030 World Expo



President Yoon pushes Busan's World Expo bid at BIE general assembly



President Yoon Suk Yeol on June 20 makes a speech in English to promote Busan's bid for the 2030 World Expo at a presentation during the 172nd general assembly of the International Bureau of Expositions (BIE) in Paris

In his speech titled 'Promise of the Republic of Korea for World Citizens and Future Generations,' President Yoon expressed the nation's strong intent to host the expo in Busan.

Busan Is Good for EXPO and Everything Else.



Busan, Korea's second largest city and one of its most popular tourist destinations, has gained a reputation as a coastal resort for its beautiful beach and vibrant culture.

Busan's unique blend of modern infrastructure and traditional Korean culture makes it an ideal location for the 2030 World Expo.

Wagner head rejected offer to join army - Putin

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: Wagner mercenary group head Yevgeny Prigozhin has rejected an offer to his fighters to serve as a unit in Russia's army, President Vladimir Putin says.

Mr Putin said he had offered them several 'employment options', including continued service under the command of a senior Wagner commander known by his nom de guerre Sedoi - Grey Hair

LAHORE: In a shocking revelation, the Punjab interior department has recently shared that as the instances of sexual abuse of children rise, more boys than girls become victims of such crimes.

Majority of minors abused in Punjab are boys: report

DNA

LAHORE: In a shocking revelation, the Punjab interior department has recently shared that as the instances of sexual abuse of children rise, more boys than girls become victims of such crimes.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanks IMF chief

Shehbaz reassured that he will not tolerate an iota of violation of this agreement

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had a telephonic conversation with MD IMF, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva today.

Govt mulls strict laws to counter disinformation

The PTA authorities are of the view that PECA, 2016 doesn't provide adequate assistance to take action against those who are spreading fake news

ISLAMABAD: To counter the dissemination of fake news and propaganda, the government has decided to amend the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of 2016 (PECA), and relevant laws are being studied.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf witnessing Turkiye Art Exhibition displayed on the occasion of Turkish Democracy and National Unity Day. - DNA